

PREFACE

This is the 25th-anniversary issue of *Archaeologia Baltica*. The volume focuses exclusively on research into north European Stone Age archaeology in the chapter ‘The Stone Age in Northern Europe: Changes in Landscape, Technologies and Beliefs’. This chapter covers various themes relating to the three periods of the Stone Age, Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic. The articles seek to address important regional aspects of the Stone Age, from the development of the recolonisation of the landscape to technologies and mobile art. The second chapter in the volume is called ‘Material from the Medieval and the Modern Age: Social Interaction between Communities’, and presents articles on Medieval and Modern Age archaeology. There are only three papers in this chapter; however, they discuss important issues relating to social, religious and political activities. We hope readers enjoy this issue, and that everyone finds some useful information in this issue of *Archaeologia Baltica*!

In the first article, Jakub Mugaj presents the colonisation process by Hamburgian culture in the lowlands of northern Europe using Polish archaeological data. The article focuses on techniques used in flint processing, which makes the culture comparable with German areas of Hamburgian culture. The author touches on an important question about the east Baltic region: were there sites of Hamburgian culture in Lithuania?

The presence of Bromme culture and Ahrensburgian culture in the east Baltic region still remains unclear. Well-established settlements have not yet been found, and more of them refer to sandy-type sites and stray finds. In his article ‘Grensk Culture in Eastern Belarus: The Current State of Research’, Aliaksandr U. Kolasau seeks to present the development of Grensk culture studies and its flint inventory and technology in Belarus, and to compare it with analogues in Ukraine. Grensk culture in Belarus is known as Late Palaeolithic culture, and has many technical similarities with the well-known Ahrensburgian culture in northwest Europe.

Early Holocene communities in the Mesolithic experienced significant changes in the climate, which were influenced not only by changes in temperature and flora, but also by fluctuations in water levels. These changes must have been extremely difficult for people who lived on the shores of the Yoldia and Littorina seas, and Lake Ancylus. In his article, Lars Larsson presents studies on south and central Sweden, where fluctuating water levels influenced people’s choice of settlement sites.

There are still few finds made from material of organic origin in the archaeological record from stratified settlements of the Lithuanian Mesolithic. However, the region is characterised by an abundance of stray finds made during the drainage of wetlands and lakes in the 20th century. Some of these are harpoons and slotted bone points with flint inserts. Unfortunately, their true age has not been determined until now. In their article, Livija Ivanovaitė and her colleagues set out to solve this problem. Bone subjects from the River Šventoji, Obšrūtai and Kamšai were sent for AMS dating and species identification, as well as for technical and use-wear analysis.

Mesolithic researchers from across northern Europe have already shown that there was a technological connection between the various Baltic regions. Flint techniques are no exception either, and travelled hundreds of kilometres. In his article “Kongemose Flint Technology in the East Baltic Area. Some Examples from Lithuanian Stone Age Sites”, Tomas Rimkus seeks to demonstrate the technological link between the east and west Baltic Sea regions by demonstrating variability in microlithic implements. An analysis was conducted on rhombic points, of which the main period of existence in the southern part of Scandinavia was during the time of Kongemose culture.

Aleh Tkachou presents techniques, types and decoration of Early Neolithic Dubičiai and Nemunas culture pottery in western Belarus, focusing on the basin of the River Nemunas. Comparisons are made with cultures

that established early pottery in the region. The author also touches on the southern part of Lithuania, where early Dubičiai pottery types have been found.

The next three articles deal with Stone Age issues relating to mobile Neolithic art. In the first article, Ilga Zagorska, John Meadows and Marius Iršėnas provide new C¹⁴ data from Zvejnieki Stone Age graves where objects of art were found. These graves date from the sixth to the fourth millennium BC. The article also reconsiders art objects found in graves, their position in relation to the deceased, and their symbolic meaning.

Marius Iršėnas and his colleagues write about some of the most famous Lithuanian Neolithic art objects, elk staffs from the Šventoji settlements. The staffs were found in the Šventoji 3 and 4B sites in 1972 and 1989, during large-scale excavations conducted by the famous Lithuanian archaeologist Rimutė Rimantienė. The article tries to look at the staffs from a different point of view. Use-wear analysis method and analogies with other north European countries were used for this. One of the staffs from the Šventoji 3 settlement was C¹⁴ dated for the first time.

The last article on Stone Age research also relates to Prehistoric art. Adomas Butrimas, Regina Ulozaitė and Marius Iršėnas provide new insights on an amber disc with cross decoration found in the Daktariškė 5 Neolithic settlement. A new method, spectral analysis, was applied, by which organic material from the amber ornament was identified. These discoveries have led to the assumption that the amber ornament used to look totally different to what we see now. The article also

presents data on the chronology, symbolism, typology and distribution of decorated amber discs in northern Europe.

There is also a chapter in this volume with three articles on Medieval and Modern Age archaeology. In the first, Edvinas Ubis discusses pottery from the 13th and 14th centuries in western Lithuania. The author analyses local works of ceramics by comparing them with the Teutonic Order's ceramics, considered to be imported. The paper illustrates the integration of local people into the lands ruled by the Teutonic Order on the basis of studies of pottery.

In the second article, Skaistė Ardavičiūtė-Ramanauskienė presents data about spoons with apostle figures. The main area covered by research in this article is the Old Town of Vilnius, the former capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The article discusses aspects of the identification, material, context and provenance of the spoons.

The last paper in this issue is dedicated to stoneware ceramics of Vilnius Old town, presented by Miglė Urbonaitė-Ubė. Never-before published data shows an important connection to Europe's most important stoneware manufacture centres. The author discusses the technology of stoneware as well. According to this data, the earliest stoneware production came to Vilnius with newcomers from western Europe.

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Algirdas Girininkas

